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AN
HUMBLE ATTEMPT
TOWARDS THE
REVIVAL
OF
FAMILY-RELIGION
AMONG
CHRISTIANS.

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AN

HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TO THE



R. E. A. L.

OF

FAMILY-RECORD

AMONG

CHRISTIAN

A N
Humble Attempt
TOWARD THE
REVIVAL
OF
FAMILY-RELIGION
AMONG
CHRISTIANS.

By DAVID MUIR, A. M.

L O N D O N:

Printed for the Author, and Sold by
J. OSWALD at the *Rose and Crown* in
the *Poultry, Cheapside.*

M,DCC,XLIX.

REMARKABLE ATTEMPT

TOWARD THE



EXHIBITION

AND

CHRISTIANITY

AND

LONDON

Printed by the Author and Sold by

J. G. and J. H. in the Strand

M.DCCCXIX



TO THE

Church of Christ,

Which I serve in the Ministry of the
Gospel, in *Broad-street, Wapping.*

My dear Friends,



*Shall make no Apology to
the World, for publishing
the following Sheets ; and I
persuade myself I need make none for
addressing them in this Manner to
you.*

*you. The affectionate Regard which
 you have, in so many Instances, ma-
 nifested to me since Providence has
 cast my Lot among you, requires no
 less at my Hand; and I hope the
 Importance of the Subject, and the
 Affection of the Offerer will make
 some Amends for the Meanness of the
 Present. It is my sincere Desire to
 God, that as long as I live I may be
 some Way useful to you either in the
 Conversion or Edification of your
 Souls: With this View I have now
 put into your Hands this HUMBLE
 ATTEMPT TOWARDS THE REVIVAL
 OF FAMILY RELIGION AMONG
 CHRISTIANS. As one Text is the
 Foundation of the whole Performance,
 I judge it needless to divide it into se-
 veral*

veral Discourses, as I was obliged to do when I delivered it from the Pulpit; but whether joined or divided I hope you will not find it altogether an unprofitable Companion; and if, with all its Imperfections, it be happily instrumental to promote any Degree of Piety and Reformation among us, I shall have no reason to repent, nor others to censure, the Publication of it.

I shall add no more but my sincere and fervent Prayers: That you and your Families may always be under the divine Protection; that you may grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that Goodness and Mercy may follow you
all

(viii)

*all thro' this World, and crown you
with the brightest Glory in the next.*

These are the sincere good Wishes of

*Your most affectionate Friend
and Servant*

In the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

David Muir.

10 JA 66

GOVERNORS

AND

HEADS of FAMILIES

Urged to the

Practice of Family-Religion,

FROM

JOSHUA XXIV. 15. last Clause.

*-----But as for me and my House,
we will serve the LORD.*

THE lamentable Decay of FAMILY-RELIGION, in the present Age, shall be my Apology for some Discourses on this Subject. And, as your Souls, my dear Brethren, are in a peculiar Manner committed to my Care; and I lie under the strongest Obligations to contribute all in my Power to save them from final Ruin, I expect your most favourable Ear, your closest Attention; while from a Consciousness of the Duty I owe to my great Lord and Master,

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to

to you, the People of my Charge, and to my own Soul, I give you fair Warning both of your Sin and Danger, if found negligent, cold and careless, in the Discharge of *Family-Religion*. I am sensible there are some of you who make Conscience of this Duty; would to God, I could say you all did so: But alas! I have too great Reason to fear, there is but little *Family-Religion* in many of your Houses: Notwithstanding the great God has built you Tabernacles, you have not erected Altars in them for him, and you do not pay him that Family Worship that is his Due. And therefore I look upon myself as too nearly concerned in this Matter, to pass it over in Silence: Yea, I should be justly chargeable with Unfaithfulness to God, to you, and myself, did I not exert my utmost Endeavours to remedy this fatal Evil, by exhorting you who are negligent to a more conscientious Performance of this your Duty, and to quicken you who are cold and indifferent to a more vigorous Discharge of it.

Now, as a proper Foundation for this Subject, I have made Choice of that truly NOBLE AND PIOUS RESOLUTION of good *Joshua*: *But as for me and my House, we will serve the LORD.* As I judge it needless to spend your Time about the Connection of these Words with the surrounding Context; so
neither

neither is there any Room for a nice and critical Explication of them. It may suffice to observe, that here *Joshua* takes it for granted, that every rational Creature is bound by the Law of its Creation to pay Worship, Homage and Adoration to the great God of Heaven and Earth, *in whom we all live, and move, and have our Being*, Acts xvii. 28. And whereas he adds, *for me and my House*, he intimates to us, that all Heads and Governors of Families are under very peculiar Obligations to set up and maintain the Worship of God in their Dwellings.

The Point then which comprehends the main Scope of the Text, and is most suitable to my present Intention, is this,

The Practice of Family Religion is peculiarly incumbent on all Heads and Governors of Families.

The Method in which I shall treat of this Subject is this,

I. To open up the Nature of this Duty.

II. To mention a few of the many and strong Obligations that lye upon all concerned to practise it.

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III. To

III. To enquire, Whence is it, that such a general and woful Neglect of *Family-Religion* prevails at this Day? And then,

IV. To conclude all with such Addresses to several Sorts of Persons, as are very suitable to the Subject under our present Consideration,

I. Let us consider and open the Nature of the Duty mentioned in my Text. Now, this Part of our Task will be the more easily performed, if we suffer ourselves to reflect, that every Family-Governor sustains a three-fold Character, *viz.* of a PROPHET, to instruct his Family in all the Branches of useful Knowledge, especially in those which tend most to perfect their Nature, and to promote their great and ultimate End, the Glory of God and their final Happiness: Of a PRIEST, to discharge every Act of Family-Worship, especially to pray with and for his Household: And in fine, of a KING, to direct, govern and provide for them all the Necessaries of Life. Thus I think the great and important Duty in my Text divides itself into three Branches, to which I shall now speak in their Order.

I. The Duty of every Parent or Head of a Family lies in instructing his Children and
 Servants

Servants in all useful Knowledge, especially in that which tends most to promote the Glory of God and their final Happiness, in whatever is necessary to their being the faithful and obedient Servants of God in this Life, and the happy Possessors of a glorious Life of Immortality, when Time shall be no more. As there are, alas! too many Parents and Family-Governors, who train up their Children and Servants in the Principles of Atheism, Irreligion and Profaneness; who teach them, at least by their Example, to despise every thing that is serious and sacred, and to make a Mock of Sin; so there are not a few, who know not how to give good Things to them, but, as one speaks, teach them Error instead of Truth, or feed their Minds with airy Notions, or bias them too much with Party Principles, and doubtful as well as needless Speculations. Therefore, to guard you, who have Families committed to your Charge, against such a Conduct, suffer me to mention a few Things that ought more especially to be the Subject-Matter of Family Instruction.

Now then I judge it very proper to begin the Instruction of those under our Care, by acquainting them with their sinful and miserable State by Nature. For tho' some Men may laugh at *Original Sin*, banter and

ridicule the System of original Corruption; yet woful Experience tells us, that our Nature is depraved and corrupted, that we have all within us, not only an Indifference, but an Averseness to the Things of the Spirit of God. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The Case therefore being thus, every pious and Christian Parent should teach and instruct his Children, concerning the Corruption of their Hearts and Natures, as the sad Fruit and Consequence of Man's first Apostacy from God: He should tell them that Sin hath diffused itself through the whole Mass of their Nature in their first Formation, insomuch, that *Transgressors from the Womb* is the true Description and Character of each of them; yea, that, in the Apostle's Language, *they are by Nature Children of Wrath*, Eph. ii. 3.

Having thus acquainted them, with their miserable State by Nature, every Christian Parent and Head of a Family should next acquaint those under their Care, that *there is Hope in Israel concerning this thing*, Ezra x. 2. God is not irreconcilable, but waits to be gracious, and is ready to receive every penitent returning Sinner into Favour: *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked,*

Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways, for why will ye die? Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

But as there is no coming to God without a Mediator, all Parents and Masters of Families should be careful to instruct their Childrep and Servants to make use of *Christ* as the only Way to the Father; for as there is but one God, so there is but *one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. And our Saviour himself tells us, *Joh. xiv. 6. No Man cometh unto the Father but by me.* Fallen Man may, and must come to God as a Judge; but cannot come to him as a Father, otherwise than through the kind Interposition of an All-sufficient Mediator. If therefore we should neglect to instruct those of our Household in this most absolutely necessary Piece of Knowledge, we should fail in a main Point, and endanger their eternal Salvation. Again,

All Heads of Families should teach their Children and Servants, that it is owing, entirely owing to *Christ's* meritorious Righteousness, that any of *Adam's* sinful Race are restored to the Favour of God in this World, and finally saved in the next;
that

that they must rest in this as the only safe Bottom, and disclaim all Shadow of Confidence in any Deeds of their own; *for by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified*, Gal. ii. 16.

But when we teach our Children and Servants this Doctrine, let us beware of saying any thing to the Disadvantage of Holiness; for, as *without Faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. 6. so *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, Chap. xii. 14. Though we are not to teach our Children, that Holiness is any Part of that Righteousness which justifies in the Sight of God; yet we must acquaint them, that Holiness is indispensibly necessary, both in respect of the Command of God, 1 *Thess.* iv. 3. *This is the Will of God, even our Sanctification*; and also to our being Partakers of eternal Glory and Happiness; it being absolutely impossible, in the Nature of Things, that an unholy Soul could be happy, even in the Regions of Paradise, because there would be no Suitableness or Agreement of Nature in him to that State.

All those Things above mentioned, I apprehend, are very necessary to be taught and inculcated upon our Children and Servants, in order to promote the Happiness
of

of their immortal Souls. But as it would swell my Subject to too great a Bulk, if I mentioned every Particular in which Parents and Masters of Families should instruct those under their Care, I shall only add here;

That every Governor should, according to his Capacity, teach those of his House, the Truths both of Natural and Revealed Religion; but especially the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity that are necessary to be believed and practised in order to Salvation. And *finally, my Brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise*, let us teach our Children *to think on these things*, Phil. iv. 8. Having thus spoke to the first Branch of a Family-Governor's Duty; I mean, that Instruction he should give his Children and Servants, I proceed,

2. To that which relates to his Priestly Character, his setting up and maintaining the Worship of God in his Family. It is no difficult Task to prove, that the People of God, in all Ages, carefully maintained the Worship of God in their respective Families: And that more especially in the early Days of Christianity, as soon as any

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Master

Master of a Family embark'd in the Christian Cause, he immediately set up the Worship of God in his House. Hence 'tis, that the Houses of the primitive Christians were so frequently stiled Churches, *Rom. xvi. 5.* and elsewhere. And 'tis not to be questioned, that every Family ought to be a Church, wherein the great God should have solemn Worship and Adoration paid him.

In order, therefore, that every Family-Governor may discharge this Part of his Duty, let him carefully attend to, and study to practise the following Things :

(1.) He must be careful to read the Sacred Scriptures to those of his House. As this is a Duty incumbent on every private Christian, even to search the Scriptures ; so it in a special Manner becomes all Heads of Families to instruct those under their Care, in the Knowledge of the Word of God, which is singularly adapted and every Way suited to the Purposes of Light and Grace, of Knowledge and Holiness, or in the Language of the Apostle, *2 Tim. iii. 15. Is able to make them wise unto Salvation.* 'Tis not enough that Masters of Families do mind and regard God's Word themselves, and by Faith and Affection pursue their own Happiness

piness by it; but they ought to be deeply concerned, as they are expressly commanded, to be early, dexterous and diligent, in making all under their Care acquainted with it also, that it may be of equal Advantage to both, even the Power of God for the Salvation of the Governor and his Household. For Oh! who knows the Power of God's Word? There is such a saving Virtue and Efficacy in it, that it is no where to be found, no, not in the Writings of the wisest and best of all the Moral Philosophers. And though the Writings of several learned and holy Men in the Christian World, as well as the Sermons they have preached, have been made effectual, by the Blessing of God, to the enlivening and quickening of many, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, instructing the Ignorant, and bringing back those that were out of the Way; yet all the converting, sanctifying and saving Virtue of these Discourses is fetched from the Holy Scriptures: *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul*, Ps. xix. 7. Let me therefore beseech you, who are Governors of Families, not to be so barbarously cruel to the Persons of your Charge, as to neglect the reading of God's Word to them. Think not, that if you feed and cloath their Bodies, you sufficiently discharge your Duty to them; no, you must be also

careful to feed their Souls with *the sincere Milk of God's Word, that they may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

(2.) He must pray with and for his Household. This is no less necessary than the former ; for whoever neglects Prayer, have little Ground to think, that Reading will be of any great Service, or answer any valuable Purpose. Hence 'tis, that the best of Family-Governors, in all Ages, have been indefatigable in the Performance of this Part of Family-Religion. Whether we look into the Old or New Testament, we find sufficient Proof of this. When we consult the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, we find the Patriarchs engaged in building Altars, and calling upon the Name of the Lord with their whole Households : And it is particularly mentioned, to the immortal Honour of King *David*, one of the best of Parents and Masters, that *as soon as he had made an End of his Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, he returned to bless his Household*, 2 Sam. vi. 18, 20. That is, as some Commentators understand the Words, to bless God with his Family, and to beg God's Blessing on them. And if we look into the Writings of the New Testament, we will find mention made of a Church in the House of *Nymphas*, Col. iv. 15. and of
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a Church in *Philemon's* House, *Philem. ver. 2.* which can import nothing less, than that the Worship of God was performed in those Families, and this Duty of Prayer in particular. But to put this beyond all Doubt, we read frequently of our blessed Saviour's being alone, praying with his twelve Disciples, which was then his little Family.

Besides, the very Nature of Things requires this ; For are there not Family-Mercies, which all in the House are jointly concerned to pray for, when wanted ? And to make grateful Acknowledgments and suitable Returns for, when received ? Are there not Family-Afflictions and Crosses, which they are in common concerned to pray against ? And are there not Family-Sins which call for sincere Confessions and deep Humiliations ? Surely there are. And what then can be more reasonable and just, more decent and comely, than to behold whole Families joining together in Prayer ; to see those who live and love, eat and drink together, wrestling at the Throne of Grace together ! O that all, who have Families committed to their Care, were but diligent to perform this Part of their Duty toward them ! O ye Christian Parents and Governors, put on good *Joshua's* Resolution, that as for you and your Families, you will serve

the Lord in this Respect. This is the Way to make your Fellowship and Communion an holy Fellowship, to sweeten your Comforts and Converse, and to sanctify all your Enjoyments, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. *For every Creature of God is good, says the Apostle, if it be received with Thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and Prayer.* But to proceed,

(3.) The singing of Psalms, Hymns, or spiritual Songs, I think, should be brought in as a third Part of Family-Worship. It is too evident to be denied, that this Part of Worship is wofully neglected, even in many Families where the two former are carefully and conscientiously performed. But what can be the Reason of this, I am at a Loss to determine; seeing I will venture to affirm, that singing of Psalms is no less an Ordinance of God, than reading the Scriptures and Prayer. That Psalmody is an Ordinance of God, may be easily proved from Scripture and the Practice of the Saints. Scripture is very express on this Head; for, says the Psalmist, *It is good to sing Praises unto our God*, Ps. cxlvii. 1. And Ps. c. 2. *Serve the Lord with Gladness, come before his Presence with Singing.* Your Time would fail me to mention all the Places in the Book of God, where you may see

see the sweet Singer of *Israel* elevated above himself, and to speak of his great Ravishments of Soul in this Duty. But behold there is yet a greater than *David* here engaged in the Practice of this Part of Family-Religion; I mean, *David's* Lord and Saviour. For, when he had eat the *Passover* with his Disciples, who were his Family, and instituted the Sacrament of his Supper, he concluded all with an Hymn of Praise to his heavenly Father. This was the last Time he had an Opportunity of performing Family-Worship, when, you see, singing of Psalms was not forgotten. And surely we cannot copy after a better Pattern, than that of our dearest Lord. As often, therefore, O ye Governors of Families, as you have Occasion to be engaged in Family-Worship, in reading the Scriptures, and praying with and for those under your Care, let not this Part of your Duty, viz. singing of Psalms, be neglected. *Let the Word of God dwell in you richly in all Wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing with Grace in your Hearts to the Lord, Col. iii. 16.* When this Part of Family-Worship is carried (*ὁμοθυμαδόν*) with joint Consent, this heaves upwards every Petition more forcibly, and takes Heaven as it were by Storm and Violence. Oh! what

what Cause of Lamentation then is it, that this Part of Family-Devotion is so wofully neglected by Christians at this Day? Time was, when the Streets of *London* eccho'd forth the Praises of our God; but now this Duty seems almost to be quite laid aside; though it is a Duty of such Comfort and Profit, as one would think should stand in no need of Recommendation. 'Tis true, it can't be performed so secretly as the other Duties of Family-Religion; and hence 'tis, perhaps, that many of God's own People do live in the Neglect of it. They may think that thereby they shall avoid the Censures and Reproaches of the Wicked, who are apt, upon every Occasion, to be offended at any outward Shew of Religion: But for my own Part, I can't allow of this as a sufficient Reason for laying aside the Practice of this Duty altogether. What though our Lot be cast in a Neighbourhood where wicked and profane Sinners abound, Wretches who will not spare us, but call us by what they think the worst of Names, because we may let them know, we do not suffer ourselves to live as they do, in a total Neglect of Family Duties? What though I am called Hypocrite or Presbyterian, for a conscientious Discharge of my Duty in this Point? Must I therefore reckon this a sufficient Excuse for me, to neglect what is
plainly

plainly commanded, and what my God and my own Conscience tells me is a just and reasonable Service? No, I think not: But even in this Case, I should let the wicked Ridiculers of Religion know, that I am not ashamed of the Service of my God, and to *sing Praise to him with joyful Lips.* I proceed,

3. To the Regal Part of every Master of a Family's Duty. And here I am fully satisfied, that the Law, which King *Abasuerus* made, *Esther* i. 22. is every Way agreeable to the Natural and Positive Law of God, *That every Man should bear Rule in his own House.*

Now, in order to discharge this Part of his Duty, every Head of a Family has particularly three Things to do :

(1.) To make all proper and necessary Provision for the Maintenance of his Household. He should take special Care of the Bodies and temporal Welfare of all who stand in a Family-Relation to him ; and this Care must be suitable to his Abilities, and sufficient to the Ends of a useful and comfortable Life ; for thus speaks the Apostle : *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own House, he*
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hath

both denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8. This we are taught not only from Scripture, but by the lower Rank and Order of Creatures; who, by the bare Instinct of Nature, contrive the Safety, and labour for the Conveniencies of their young ones. What wonderful Skill do the little feather'd Folks discover, and Pains take, in working their Nests, or building their Houses, and nursing their tender Offspring, till they are capable of shifting for themselves? And surely, if bare Nature, unassisted by any other Thing, prompts them to this; how much more should Reason and Grace, superadded to Nature, in Men, constrain them to contribute their utmost Endeavours for the Support and Comfort of their Children and Servants. But,

(2.) Every Head of a Family should use his pious Counsels, proper Reproofs, and seasonable Corrections, to preserve those under his Care from every evil and wicked Way. Parents and Governors of Families should rule their Houses well, and keep their Children and Servants in Subjection, with all Gravity and becoming Authority. The foolish Lenity and Indulgence of Parents, has frequently proved the Ruin of their Children and Servants; and, by sparing the Rod, they have lost the Child. For
though

though God hath invested Heads of Families with Authority over their Households; yet if any under their Care are left to themselves, or indulged in Folly or Idleness, suffered to run into wicked Courses, and contract evil Habits; their Authority then will, in all human Probability, be of very little Force, and their Counsels, though ever so good, too weak to reclaim them. And therefore every Family-Governor, upon his first observing any of his Charge taking to bad Ways, should immediately set himself to counsel, reprove and correct them. And if he finds this will not reclaim them, he seems to be, in the

(3.) Place, warranted by Scripture to expel them his Family, according to that of the Psalmist, ci. 7. *He that worketh Deceit shall not dwell within my House: he that telleth Lies, shall not tarry in my Sight.* Vice is so very infectious, that one wicked Person may soon corrupt the Morals of others in the Family: Yea, Children and Servants, who descend from the Loins of the best Parents, have a corrupt Quality in them, derived from guilty *Adam*, which renders them susceptible of vicious Impressions, and makes them liable to be easily corrupted. Besides, the Way of Vice is smooth, broad, pleasant, and desirable to

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corrupt

corrupt Nature, 'tis agreeable to Flesh and Blood. And therefore such Considerations as these should awaken in Parents and Masters a due Concern for the Welfare of their Families, not only by giving them all proper Instruction, and daily admonishing them, but likewise by taking Care what Company they keep, and especially that there be none suffered to live with them in the same House, who are openly wicked and profane; for, says the Apostle, *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners*, 1 Cor. xv. 33. The Company Children or Servants keep or converse with, as they be either virtuous or vicious, such, in all Probability, will be their own Behaviour. Good Companions will be no Hinderance unto, but rather Encouragers of, and Contributors to forward and advance the Work of Religion in their Souls: But bad Companions will do all they can to obstruct their Progress Heavenward, to make them loose and profane; yea, *to every good Work reprobate*. And therefore, methinks, every pious Governor should be careful to suffer none guilty of open Vice and Immorality to lodge beneath his Roof. Thus I have spoke to the Duty of every religious Parent or Head of a Family, as it relates to his three-fold Character, viz. Prophet, Priest and King. The

II. d. Ge-

IId. General, is, To mention a few of the many and strong Obligations that lie upon all concerned to practise this Duty, as above explained.

I, A grateful Sense of the many Favours and Blessings, both of a spiritual and temporal Nature, bestowed upon you that are Heads of Families, should move you to the Practice of this Duty. Doth not Reason tell you, that God is the Author and Constituter of Families, the Governor and Benefactor of those lesser Societies, as well as King among the Nations? 'Tis God that appointeth to all Men the Bounds of their Habitations; And does it not follow from thence, that he is to be owned and acknowledged as such? Seeing, therefore, God in his Providence has brought you into a Family-Relation, built you Tabernacles, and committed Children and Servants to your Care; seeing he superintends the Affairs of your Families, preserves them from innumerable Evils, and supplies them with all needful Good, shall you not be chargeable with the utmost Ingratitude, if you lay not yourselves out to instruct and govern them, after such a Manner as may promote the Glory and Honour of your kind Benefactor? How can you, who have the Direction of Families,

Families, expect that they will be obedient, and grateful to you, when you yourselves do not take proper Methods to declare your own Gratitude, and to hinder them from being ungrateful to the great God? What Parents, or Masters of Families, who have the Reason of Men, or even so much as one Spark of Generosity and Gratitude remaining in them, shall dare to think themselves at Liberty, whether to own their Dependence on God, and Obligation to him herein, or not? But,

2. If Gratitude to your best Friend and most bountiful Benefactor, will not move you to the Practice of this Duty; methinks, Love and Pity to your Children and Servants should constrain you to it. If you look into the World of Animals, how strongly will you find their Affection to their Young? As they are careful to nurse and feed, so to protect and defend them from Injury, to the utmost of their Power. Now then, should not Reason and Religion in Men regulate and improve, and not destroy the Affections of their animal Natures? I confess, indeed, there are many, who have such a peculiar Regard and Fondness, not only for their Children, but for some of their Servants, that their Lives are bound up in theirs: As *Juda* said of his Father *Jacob*,

Jacob, His Life is bound up in the Lad's Life, Gen. xliv. 30. So strong is the Affection of some for their Children, and even Servants, that they grudge them nothing that is conducive to their temporal Welfare and Advantage: But Oh! how much more solicitous should they be about their spiritual and eternal Welfare? What, all this affectionate and tender Concern for the least and perishing Part of those under your Care; and little or no Concern to adorn their better Part, their immortal Souls, with divine Knowledge and Grace, this best and most valuable Furniture; to warm them with Love to God their Saviour, which would fit them for Communion with him in this Life, and the eternal Enjoyment of him in the next? Sure I am, if you have the Faith of Christians, and the Affection and Compassion of Parents, you will not think you have sufficiently discharged your Duty, when you have only provided for the temporal Welfare of your Families: No, I say, you cannot; for you must be conscious to yourselves, that the greater and more material Part is still undone, you having made no Provision for their eternal Happiness. Again,

3. If neither of the above Arguments will prevail with you; yet let that powerful
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and constraining Motive of Self-Interest constrain you to practise Family-Religion. All Parents and Masters of Families have a special Interest of their own, in the Welfare and Happiness of their Children and Servants ; and therefore, the powerful Motive of Interest, the strong Principle of Self-Love, so deeply rooted in our Natures, should prevail with us Parents and Masters, to take all imaginable Care of our respective Households.

As to you, Parents, you should seriously consider, if you are not, as far as in you lies, careful to cultivate the Minds, and narrowly watch the Behaviour of your Children, you may justly expect Abundance of Sorrow in seeing them wicked and bad Livers ; and if once they prove *Enemies to God in their Minds by wicked Works*, they will not be long Friends to you ; for natural Love often ends in unnatural Hatred. A wicked Man or Woman will not conscientiously be a good Son or a good Daughter. May I not appeal to yourselves, saying, Is it not most just with God, that the Child, which you do not desire and endeavour to make a Friend to Him, should become a Foe to you ? And that the Child whom you, thro' a criminal Fondness or Neglect, indulge in the Practice of Iniquity, should in Time to
come

come prove the greatest Grief of your Soul, God suffering, to your Sorrow, him or her to rebel against you, whom you suffered and saw, without Sorrow, to rebel against him. If therefore, *there be any Bowels of Pity, if any Compassion of Love*, if any Kindness and tender Affections in your own Bosoms for the Souls of your young and dear Offspring, or if any Regard for your own Comfort, then let me beseech you to evidence the same, by using all possible Means to bring them up in the Fear of the Lord. Sure I am, if you consult your own Interest in this Matter, and are desirous to have dutiful and obedient Children, Children that will prove Comforts in Life, your Joy and Support in old Age, and Blessings to the World when you are dead and gone, you will be careful to use your utmost Endeavours to improve their better Part, and to engage them betimes in the Service of God.

Now, as this Argument of Self-Interest should prevail with you who are Parents, to discharge this Duty in so far as it respects your Children; so the same Argument should influence you, who are Masters of Families, to the Practice of the same Duty with respect to your Servants. It needs no Proof, that your Interest greatly depends up-

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on their being really virtuous and godly. You all earnestly wish for faithful and honest Servants: But what Reason have you to expect such Servants, if you yourselves are not careful to discharge your Duty to them, by instructing them in what they owe both to God and Man. It is too evident to be denied, that many Servants, when they first set out in the World, through a criminal Negligence, either of their Parents, or those who had the Care of their Education in their younger Years, are grossly ignorant of the Things that belong to their truest Interest, the Salvation of their immortal Souls; and therefore, if you who are Masters, do not take Pity upon them, and instruct them in those Things, they must continue ignorant still. As there never was greater Reason to complain of the Ignorance, Negligence, and Unfaithfulness of Servants, than in the present Day, so I am afraid, the Cause of this lies chiefly at the Door of Masters of Families. No Wonder if Servants prove slothful, disobedient and wicked, when those who have the Charge of them are negligent in the Discharge of their Duty towards them; when they do not pray with them, and instruct them as they ought. Therefore, I say, did Masters consult their own Interest, they should take all imaginable Care to instruct and engage their Servants

vants in the Practice of Piety and Virtue ; for true and undefiled Religion will make People good in every Character, in every Relation: It will make good Masters and good Servants, good Parents and good Children. The Apostle *Paul* could, with great Confidence, engage for *Onesimus*, that he would prove a good and faithful Servant, after he knew that he was become a good Christian. Be you, therefore, who are Masters, earnestly solicitous to make your Servants truly religious ; and if, by the Blessing of God upon your pious Endeavours, you are once so happy as to succeed, you may then depend upon it, that you shall be faithfully and honestly served. A just and true Sense of Religion will effectually make your Servants both faithful and profitable. Truly religious Servants will make Conscience of their Time and Trust, and of their Master's Interest as of their own. But,

4. If neither of the above Arguments, nor all together, will prevail; yet let the awful Consideration of that particular and solemn Account, which you must give to God in the great Day, persuade to comply with this Duty, and without Delay to put in Practice this noble Resolution of good *Joshua*, in my Text. All Parents and Heads of Fa-

milies should consider, there is a Day coming, when they must be accountable for every Child and Servant under their Care; and according as they have performed or neglected their Duty towards them, receive a suitable Reward. The Lord delivers the very same Charge to every Superintendent of a Family that *Pharaoh's* Daughter gave to the Mother of *Moses*, *Exod. ii. 7. Bring it up for me, and I will give you your Wages.* In like Manner, I say, God may be conceived speaking to every Family-Governor; "Take this Child, this Servant
 " that I have put under your Care, and
 " nurse him or her for me, bring him up
 " in the Way that will tend most to
 " promote my Glory, and his own eternal Welfare; and according to your Behaviour in this, so shall it fare with you
 " hereafter." Oh! that all you, who are intrusted with the Care of Children and Servants, may so acquit yourselves with respect to them, as to be able to give up your Account with Joy, and not with Grief. Consider, I beseech you, how dreadful it must be, for any of you who are Parents, to have a Charge brought in against you at the Bar of God, for having contributed towards the eternal Ruin of your own Children! What shall you be able to say or do, when in the Midst of Pain and Torment,

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you are reproached by your suffering Children, in some such cutting Language as this? " Ah! cruel Parent, a bloody one, " indeed, hast thou been to me! Never " to be at any Pains about my eternal " Welfare; never to warn me of this " Place of Torment; never to tell me of " a Saviour, and the Way to escape the " *Wrath to come*; never to restrain me, " when it was in your Power, from the " Paths of Vice, that have brought me " down into the Chambers of Death. O " cursed Indulgence! thus to indulge me, " to my everlasting Ruin." Thus dreadful must be the Condition of all wicked and negligent Parents, who are at no Pains to train up their Children in the Fear of the Lord, but suffer them to go on in Sin, till Iniquity proves their Ruin,

And thus miserable also will your Case be, who are Heads of Families, if you suffer your Servants to live wicked Lives, without taking proper Methods for instructing them in Religion, and reclaiming them from sinful Courses. Remember, that your Servants are Part of your Charge, as well as your Children; and you must give an Account before the awful Bar of the great God, how you have performed your Duty towards them. Now, if it be found in that
Day

Day, that you indulged them in Wickedness, and Ignorance of the great, necessary and important Truth of the Gospel, they will certainly be swift Witnesses against you, and those of your own House shall be your greatest Enemies. How will they then upbraid you, and curse the Day that ever they entered into your House, in which they saw nothing of the Fear of God, received no pious Instruction, and heard no fervent Prayers put up to the Throne of Grace with and for them. These, my Friends, are very weighty Considerations, such as may justly make our Ears to tingle, and our Hearts to tremble, lest any of us should, at the great Day of our final Account, be found among the Number of those unhappy Souls, who shall be chargeable with the Ruin of their Children or Servants. God forbid, Brethren, that this should ever prove our Case; I would rather indulge the pleasing Hopes, that what hath now been said, may be a Means of stirring you up to a conscientious Discharge of Family-Religion, in every Branch of it; and so of saving not only your own Souls, but the Souls of those committed by Providence to your Care. I proceed now to the

III^d. General, *namely*, to enquire, Whence is it, that such a general and woful Neglect of Family-Religion prevails at this Day?

Is it not astonishing there should be such weighty Arguments as these now mentioned to enforce the Practice of Family-Religion, and that yet it should be so wofully neglected as it really is at this Day? Whence then this criminal Neglect, this prevailing Iniquity, if not from the following Causes?

I. From the ill Formation of Families at the first, by unsuitable Marriages and Relations. Before the *Israelites* took Possession of the promised Land, they were strictly forbid to intermarry with the Inhabitants, as they were a sinful and an idolatrous People, *Deut. vii. 3. Neither shalt thou, says Moses, make Marriages with them; thy Daughter thou shalt not give unto his Son, nor his Daughter shalt thou take unto thy Son.* And to the same Purpose doth the Apostle *Paul* address the *Corinthians*, *2 Cor. vi. 14. Be ye not unequally yoked with Unbelievers.* An unsuitable is ever like to prove an unhappy Match; and what more unsuitable than to join the pious and the

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profane,

profane, the well educated and well disposed Person with the loose and profligate? Worldly Views and Interest, 'tis to be feared, often over-rule Men in this Point: Some look for nothing but a large Fortune; others for a competent Share of the good Things of this Life; and if these are but obtained, they are indifferent whether the Person they make choice of to be their Partner for Life be pious or profane, one that fears God, or fears him not. But surely such Conduct can never be justified. Is ennobling your Blood, or advancing your Estate, a valuable Consideration for the Loss or Hazard of Religion and your immortal Souls? Is it possible, that a Child of God, and a Child of *Belial*, joined together in Marriage, will walk together blameless in God's Commandments? Is it likely that Religion will flourish in that Family, where one of its chief Members is a Stranger to the Power, yea, perhaps, has not so much as any thing of the Form of Godliness? No surely: Yea, so far from it, that I may appeal, not only to your own, but to the Experience of all Christian Nations, whether the Church of *Christ*, instead of being built up this Way, has not greatly suffered? I may appeal to the World, whether such Marriages, instead of yielding that Comfort and Satisfaction

faction the Persons concerned in them did promise themselves, have not rather proved very uncomfortable and unhappy? I cannot, therefore, but look upon this as one of the chief Causes of that criminal Neglect of Family-Religion at this Day; and I can't but heartily wish, and earnestly beseech all unmarried Persons, who have any Regard for the Glory of God, the Interest of *Christ*, and their own temporal and eternal Welfare, to chuse such a one for their nearest Relation, as will chearfully and willingly engage in the Service of the Lord. Without this Care and Circumspection, there can be but little Prospect of keeping up the Worship of God in Families; and if this be neglected, they have every thing that is dreadful to fear, in both Worlds: Whereas if, on the other Hand, they make choice of such as fear the Lord, they have Reason to hope, that all their Affairs shall go on with Ease and Pleasure, and that the Lord will bless them in their Families, *in their Baskets, and in their Store.*

2. The Neglect of Family-Religion may be owing, in a great Measure, to the omitting of it at first setting out in the World. If a Person, immediately upon commencing Head of a Family, would begin with God,

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use himself to Family-Worship, and freely resolve that his House shall be a *Bethel*, i. e. a House of God, he would, in all Probability, proceed afterwards in this important Service with Ease and Comfort, and greatly promote his own, and his Family's Welfare thereby: Whereas a Neglect of this Duty, at his first setting out, discourages a future Attempt; and the longer the Neglect is, the greater will be his Backwardness to begin: For I believe it will scarce be denied, that every wilful Omission or Neglect of Duty, does fatally increase Men's Backwardness to it, and their Reluctance against it. For Instance; the longer any Person restrains Prayer before God, the less Inclination he will have to call upon him: The longer one absents himself from the House of God's publick Worship, the less Mind will he have to go to it; and so of all other Duties, and particularly of Family-Religion. How much then is it to be wished, that all young Persons, upon God's bringing them into new Family-Relations, would open their Houses with Family-Worship; and ever after study to train up those committed by Providence to their Charge, *in the Fear and Admonition of the Lord*, Eph. vi. 4. Thus they would be in a fair Way to obtain a Blessing from on high, and Righteousness

ness from the God of their Salvation, Ps. xxiv. 5. This would be an excellent Means to conciliate the Respect of Inferiors, to make them esteemed by all wise Men, useful Members of Society, and by the wise God, the excellent ones in the Earth, in whom he would place his peculiar Delight, *Pf. xvi. 3.*

3. An inexcusable Modesty and Bashfulness of Mind may, perhaps, be assigned as another Reason for the Neglect of Family-Religion. I am apt to believe there are many possessed of a very good Will to this Duty, who nevertheless want Courage and Resolution to practise it. They imagine themselves to be Persons of but very slender Capacities, and not at all qualified for the Discharge of such an important Duty; but are, perhaps, the only Persons who have a mean Opinion of their own Abilities. This I cannot but think always a Fault, and believe it may sometimes be a Temptation. 'Tis, however, somewhat strange, that Men in all Respects qualified for Conversation and Business, should have little or no Capacity for Family-Religion, and particularly for Family-Prayer, the Matter of which is so large and copious. For how numerous are our Family-Mercies and Wants? And

'tis to be feared, our Family-Trespases and Temptations not a few. These, I think, might suggest abundant Matter of Confession, Petition and Praise. But it is more surprising, that such as seriously and constantly worship God in Publick, and daily converse with his Word and their own Hearts, should be at a Loss to express themselves pertinently upon this Occasion! How much is it to be wished, that all Christian Parents and Heads of Families would use their utmost Endeavours to shake off and overcome this unreasonable, nay, criminal Bashfulness. But if it should prove invincible, as perhaps it may in some Tempers, I should think it very adviseable for such, to make use of a well-chosen Form of Prayer, for a While at least; and I question not, but they would acquire, in a little Time, more Resolution, a greater Freedom of Mind, and Readiness of Expression, and be able to perform their Duty in an acceptable Manner, without a strict Confinement to any written Form whatsoever. Away then, O bashful Christians, with this vain Excuse! And if it be so, that you really are sensible of your own Inability for the Discharge of this important Duty, go, in a Sense of your own Weakness, unto God for Resolution and Ability; beg of him, that
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by his Spirit he would help your Infirmities, and teach thee to pour out thy Soul before him, not only in secret, but in Family-Prayer. Do begin then to make a fair Trial, and I question not, but you shall be carried through the Work, however difficult you may have apprehended it to be. Praying is the best Way to get the Gift of Prayer, and by doing your Duty you will acquire fresh Courage, and attain a greater Fitness and Ability to perform it.

4. A Multiplicity of worldly Affairs, and too great an Attachment to the Things of this Life, may be assigned as another Cause of the prevailing Neglect of Family-Religion. Most Men are so eagerly engaged in the Pursuit of Riches, and other worldly Possessions, that they can find no Time nor Leisure for the Performance of this Duty. They think, that to spend Time, every Morning and Evening, in reading and praying with the Family, would encroach too much on their worldly Business; and hence the Neglect of this important Duty. But ah! such a Conduct can never be justified. Has God given you so much Time to acquire all the Necessaries of Life for yourselves, and will you not allow some small Portion of it to be devoted to his more immediate

mediate Worship? I can't think, but your worldly Affairs might be so adjusted, and should be so pursued, as to leave Room for personal and Family-Religion. Good and wise Men will order their Affairs with Discretion; but I am sure there can be no great Discretion in the Management of the Affairs of that Family, out of which the Service of God is thrust. This is to act in a direct Opposition to our Saviour's excellent Advice, *John vi. 27. Labour not for the Meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting Life.* An over-eager Pursuit of the Things of this Life was always dangerous, and is ever likely to prove ruinous to Religion, and fatal to the Souls of Men. In order, therefore, to prevent this, you cannot take a better Method, than to begin and end the Day with God in your Families. This is the surest Way to prosper in this World, and to procure the Blessing of God upon all your Undertakings. Without this, you may assure yourselves, you spend your Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which satisfieth not, *Isa. lv. 2.* Yea, let me add, if you neglect Family-Religion on Account of the Multiplicity of your worldly Affairs, that you may have the more Time to pursue them, and increase your Wealth; know, that the
Wealth

Wealth thus procured, is cursed ; and that Substance which is the Price of Prayer, may, for any thing you know, be the Price of Blood.

Well then, my Brethren, let us seriously consider these Things ; and never suffer ourselves, through Anxiety for the perishing Enjoyments of Time, to neglect our Duty to God, and thereby forfeit eternal Happiness. For Care of the Body, let us not throw away our Souls ; yea, plunge both into endless Misery. What will all our worldly Possessions signify to us, when we come into the cold Grasp of Death, if this be neglected ? If, therefore, we have any Regard for the Favour of God, and a blessed Eternity, let us beware of neglecting this important Duty, upon any Pretence whatsoever.

Let not the Absence of some, hinder us from gathering the rest of the Family together, and worshiping God with them ; for I can never think, it will be sustained as a sufficient Reason for the Neglect of Family-Worship altogether, that some of the Family cannot be present. But to proceed,

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5thly, And lastly. May I not affirm, that the great Neglect of Family-Worship, that is but too visible at this Day, is owing to the lamentable Decay of serious Religion, and great Abatement of Zeal in Family-Governors. If we look around us in the World, we shall observe but very few, comparatively speaking, who are under a due Concern about the everlasting Welfare of their own Souls. No wonder then that there are so few really solicitous about the eternal Interests of those committed to their Charge. Our Age is grown so extremely polite, that there are Multitudes amongst us who think Religion a very unfashionable Part of a Character; so that 'tis not to be supposed or expected, such Persons will be at any Pains to cultivate it in their Families, and with their respective Households serve the Lord.

Nay, 'tis very possible, that many who are entrusted with the Care of Families may have too much Cause to reflect with Grief and Shame upon the Love of their Espousals: At first setting out, few more zealous; now, perhaps, none more cold. In Days past they were early and late with God, both in Family and Closet-Devotion;

but now they are in the Tavern or Alehouse, when they ought to be at Home, doing something for the Interest of *Christ* and Religion in their Families : Or perhaps the Lord finds them in their Beds when he expected them on their Knees. If this be the Practice of any of you who either now read or hear this, I must take the Liberty to tell you, it deserves a warm Reproof. Such a Conduct is injurious to your own Souls, and reflects Disgrace on your Character as Heads of Families, and over and above, is very prejudicial to the poor Souls committed to your Care,

I therefore beseech you, both for your own Sake, and the Sake of your Families, seriously to weigh this Matter, and allow it to have such an happy Influence upon you, as to engage you for the future vigorously and carefully to maintain the Practice of Family-Religion,

These, my Brethren, are the most obvious Causes that occur to me at present of the too general Neglect of Family-Religion at this Day. I am now arrived at the

IVth and last General, *namely*, To address myself to several Sorts of Persons : And,

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I. To

I. To such Parents and Governors as study a conscientious Discharge of Family-Religion: For though 'tis, alas! too true, that there are but few such Persons among us at this Day, yet I am satisfied, were the destroying Angel commissioned this Night to go from one End of this great City to the other, and cut off those Families that do *not serve the Lord*, I should see some few Families, of the many who join together in the public Worship of God in this Place, survive the general and dreadful Slaughter. And therefore, persuaded there are some pious Governors still left amongst us, I would beseech them, in the Language of Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 58. *Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* Be ye careful to walk in your respective Houses with a *perfect Heart*. Set a good Example before your Children and Servants; counsel and instruct them, *in the Things that belong to their Peace*, and be sure to give them good Advice in Season and out of Season. This is the ordinary and most probable Way of doing them Good, and securing them from Evil. Yea, let me tell you, if you are not careful

Careful to pursue this Course with them; you have no Reason to expect, that they shall be made wise unto Salvation. For; though I grant the Endeavours of Men to be very inconsiderable to such an End, yea, nothing at all without the Divine Blessing; yet, at the same Time, I cannot help thinking there can be no regular Hope without them. Every Christian is to discharge; to the utmost of his Power, the Duties of his Station, and leave the Issue to God. Though 'tis not your Province, nor in your Power to implant the Principles of Grace and Holiness in those of your Household; and notwithstanding all the Care and Pains you may have taken *to train them up in the Fear of the Lord*, they may turn aside into the Paths of the Destroyer, and indulge to Sin and Profanity, and thereby render themselves *a Grief to their Father, and a Bitterness to her that bare them*, Prov. xvii. 24. yet none of these Things must discourage you from your Duty. If you are truly desirous to save your own Souls, and the Souls of those committed to your Care, you must give them *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept*. And if after all, nothing will do; let this comfort and relieve you, even the Testimony of your own Conscience, that

you have been careful to discharge your Duty towards them.

2. I beg Leave to address myself to you who are the Children of pious Parents, and have been blessed with a religious Education; you who have heard many a wise Counsel and compassionate Advice drop from your Parents Lips, and from the Fondness of their pious Hearts. You, my dear Friends, have been blessed with peculiar Advantages above many others, as you have daily had the Practice of Religion set before your Eyes, and recommended to you by a good Example; and as the Precepts of it have been explained and repeated in your Ears, for your Edification. O how truly thankful should you be to the great and the best of Beings, for the Privileges of your Birth and Education! While some glory in the Antiquity of an illustrious House, and in being the Descendants of great and noble Ancestors, you may glory in being the Children of the Covenant made with *Abraham* and his Seed. To you I may apply the Words of the Apostle, *To you pertaineth the Adoption and the Promises*; which are Blessings of an infinitely superior Nature to our being born of what, in the Estimation of the World, is noble Blood. And therefore,

fore, methinks, the Consideration of God's Goodness to you, in this Respect, should awake all your active Powers to bless the God of all Grace, who has cast your Lot in a pleasant Situation, and planted you in a Family of Light and Mercy. O beware of misimproving your spiritual Privileges; for if you do, your Guilt will be terribly aggravated, and your Doom in the great Day very dreadful! All the Advantages that attend a virtuous and pious Education will be Witnesses against you at the Bar of the great God. If your Parents were frequent and earnest at the Throne of Grace on your Behalf, but you yourself would not bow a Knee to God for the Blessings of the new and well-ordered Covenant; if when your Parents call you to Piety and Virtue, you do refuse; if when they stretch out their Hands you do not regard, but set at naught all their Counsels, and will hearken to none of their Reproofs; what can you expect, *but a fearful looking-for of Judgment and fiery Indignation?* It must be confessed, that there are too many who disparage their Birth, their Parentage and Education, and, like the two wicked Sons of good old *Eli*, are public Scandals, and by their dissolute Lives bring down their Parents grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave; but I would fain

*hope better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, though I thus speak. But, if I should be mistaken, give me Leave to tell you, that if there be a hotter Place in Hell than another, you may expect to be lodged there. Therefore think, O think, before it be too late, what must be the Consequence of forsaking the Lord God of your Fathers. Are you willing to be eternally banished from all your godly Relations, at as great a Distance as between Heaven and Hell? Time was when you were delighted with your Parents Smiles, and joyful in their Presence: But how will you be able to face them in the great Day? What dreadful Confusion and Blushing must cover your guilty Countenances in that awful Hour, if they must appear as Witnesses against you, and applaud the righteous Sentence of Condemnation passed upon you, because you would not hearken to their Instruction, you would not *serve the Lord?**

3. Suffer me next to turn my Address to such Parents and Heads of Families who live in the woful Neglect of this important Duty recommended in my Text. Would to God I had no Reason to suppose any of you guilty in this Point. But ah! 'tis too evident to be denied, that there are some
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here in this our Assembly, who are at no Pains to keep up the Worship of God in their Families. Therefore, what Language shall I address you in? What can I say less, than, O ye most cruel and profane Parents and Governors! where is your Tenderness? Where your Bowels of Affection? How strangely and wickedly careless are ye of the immortal Interests of your own Offspring and Servants, and the Interest of God in them? Think, O think in Time, of the dreadful Consequence of such a Conduct. You will be condemned by the World; nay, by your own Children; you will be terribly condemned by your own Conscience, and by *Jesus*, the final and impartial Judge of the whole assembled World. O! tremble to think of the Agony that must fill your Souls in that awful Day of Account, when the Blood of your Children and Servants will call for Vengeance upon your guilty Heads, and be required at your Hands, *Ezek. iii. 18.* Your Children and Servants are given you in Charge to be brought up for the Lord, and therefore sad and uncomfortable will your Day of Reckoning be, if, through your Carelessness, they die in their Iniquities. If they miscarry, either through your indulging them in Idleness and Folly, or not teaching and admonishing them in their Duty,

Duty, they will be swift Witnesses against you in the great Day, and charge you with inhumanly murdering their Souls, because you was at no Pains to warn them to flee from the Wrath to come. Some such Language as this may then be conceived to flow from their upbraiding Lips; " Ah! " cruel and inhuman Parents and Masters, " it is owing in a great Measure to your " bad Example and woful Negligence, that " we have been plunged headlong into this " Lake of Brimstone; you were at no Pains " to bring us up in the Fear of the Lord, " to make us savingly acquainted with *Je-* " *sus*; you neither worshipped God your- " selves in your Families, nor took any " Care that we, who were under your Roof, " should serve him. O criminal Negli- " gence! O cursed Indulgence! thus to " neglect the one thing needful, and to in- " dulse us in what hath now issued in our " everlasting Ruin." In order, therefore, to prevent such a heavy Accusation being brought against you another Day by your Children and Servants, let me beseech you to fall in with good *Joshua's* Resolution in my Text, and serve the Lord with your respective Households. I proceed,

4. To address myself to the Children of irreligious Parents; such Parents as do not serve and worship God in their Families. I confess, your Case is very deplorable, and much to be pitied, seeing your Lot is cast in such Families as have not so much as the Form of Godliness; seeing you are the Offspring of such unnatural Parents, as are at no Pains to take Care of your truest and everlasting Interests; seeing you have the worst Example set before you, and are taught by your Parents Practice to neglect your immortal Concerns, and to transmit to your own Posterity all these Inconveniences, which you yourselves lie under. Should your Consciences at any Time be awakened to a Sense of Sin, and under the Strivings of God's Holy Spirit, there is none to assist you in this Case, to cherish your Convictions, and lead you to that glorious Physician, who alone can heal a wounded Spirit. O poor Souls! you are real Objects of Pity and Compassion, as your Case is thus sad and deplorable: Yea, you are in great Danger of miscarrying for ever; for is it not much to be feared you will imitate your Parents, in their Neglect of Religion, and so be lost and undone to all Eternity? You have been trained up in a

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woful Neglect of God and your Souls ; and 'tis much to be dreaded, that your future Behaviour in Life will be answerable to your unhappy and irreligious Education. It can't be denied, that this is too commonly the Case, tho', blessed be God, it is not always so ; for as some of the Children of godly Parents, notwithstanding all the Advantages of a pious Education, have forsaken the good Ways of their Parents, and run headlong into eternal Misery ; so some of the Children of wicked Parents, who have laboured under all the Disadvantages of an irreligious Education, have, in a Day of God's Power, been made to know the Things that belonged to their Peace, before they were hid from their Eyes. Your Case then, however dangerous, is not desperate. Desperate, did I say ? No ; for many such as you have been brought home to God. There was an *Abija* in the House of *Jeroboam*, in whom there was found some good Thing toward the Lord God of Israel, 1 Kings xiv. 13. An *Hezekiah* descended from the remarkably wicked *Abaz*, and a *Josiah* from *Amon*. As Grace does not run in Blood, and descend to the Posterity of good Men by Inheritance ; so neither can wicked Ancestors absolutely prevent the Lord from having Mercy upon any of their Offspring, on whom

whom he has determin'd to have Mercy. And as this is great Encouragement to you *to seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is near*, Isa. lv. 6. so, methinks, you should lose no Time in setting about this important Business, upon which your eternal All depends. Let not your Parents Neglect of their own Souls make you neglect yours also. Shall your whole Family perish, from Generation to Generation? God forbid! O then let there be, at least, one Heir of Heaven in your Line. And if your Parents should be so wicked, as rather to discourage than to countenance and assist you in this great Concern; you must remember, that Father and Mother, your nearest and dearest Relations, must all be forsaken for *Christ* and Salvation: *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, says Christ, is not worthy of me*, Matth. x. 37. Seeing, therefore, there is Hope in *Israel* concerning this Thing, how desirous and ready should you be to fall in with the Offers of Grace and Mercy made to you in the Gospel? How willingly and chearfully should you yield yourselves to *Jesus*, as your Saviour and Lord? How safely may you trust in his Atonement for the Pardon of all your Sins, and commit yourselves to the Conduct of his Word,

and the sanctifying Influences of his Spirit? How zealous should you be to comply with all his holy Commands, and to follow him who has mark'd out the Way to Life and Immortality! Then you might very reasonably hope, that notwithstanding all Disadvantages of Education which you may labour under, you shall *find Mercy of the Lord in that Day*, 2 Tim. i. 18. But, if after all I have said, you still continue to serve the Gods of your Fathers, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, you must lie down with them likewise in Sorrow that shall never end. Again,

5. Suffer me to address myself to such as may have Intentions of soon entering into a new Family-Relation. And here I would earnestly beseech such to consider before-hand, whether they be really qualified, and are resolved, if qualified, to discharge the important Trust committed to every Governor of a Family. I beseech you, my Friends, to consider this, and before-hand to put on this pious Resolution, that as soon as God in his Providence brings you into such a Relation, you and your Household will serve the Lord. O let these Words have a deep and lasting Impression on your Hearts, 1 Sam. ii. 30. *Them that honour*

honour me, saith the Lord, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed. Sure I am, that as those Persons who neglect this important Duty are in a fair Way to be lightly esteemed; so those who do conscientiously discharge it, are like to be promoted to great Honour, and to have bestowed upon them all needful and desirable Blessings, which appertain either to their Persons or Families, with Respect to their Welfare, Prosperity and Safety, agreeable to that Declaration of Moses, Deut. xxviii. 3, 4, 5. *Blessed shalt thou be in the City, and blessed shalt thou be in the Field. Blessed shall be the Fruit of thy Body, and the Fruit of thy Ground, and the Fruit of thy Cattle, the Increase of thy Kine, and the Flocks of thy Sheep. Blessed shall be thy Basket and thy Store.* O! who would not then serve the Lord?

6. and lastly; I can't help thinking but this Subject affords Matter of Address to such of you who, by the Providence of God, are in the Condition of Servants. You have heard the great Advantage that attends Family-Religion, and of Consequence what a Loss it must be to live in a Family where God is not worshipped, and where, tho' there may be Food enough for the perishing
Body,

Body, there is none for the immortal Soul : Methinks, therefore, this should engage you to be very careful in the Choice of the Place you go to, that it be a House where God is served and worshipped, and the Blessing of the Lord is most likely to dwell : And when you find the Lord has been so kind as to settle you in such a Family, you should be careful to value the Mercy, and to regulate your Opinion by Soul and Spiritual Advantages, rather than by little Presents, or more Ease ; for as the Lord hath promised to *bleſs the Habitation of the Juſt*, Prov. iii. 33. you may reasonably hope for a Share in the Mercies of ſuch a Family. And, O ! is not the Love and Blessing of God of greateſt Value ? Is not that the beſt Family to ſerve in, where your Sins will be moſt reſtrained, your Temptations feweſt, and your Souls beſt provided for and taken Care of ? Be aſſured this will bring more true Peace, Comfort and Profit in the End, than all the ungodly Families in the World, tho' ever ſo wealthy and voluptuous, eſpecially if you conſider the Dangers they are expoſed to, *Prov. iii. 33. The Curſe of the Lord is in the Houſe of the Wicked.* Dreadful Caſe ! Can you chooſe to live in that Place where the Curſe of God is ? If you do, can you expect to eſcape ? I am pretty ſure, that if you knew Ghoſts and Appa-

Apparitions to walk there in the Night, and disturb the Repose of the Inhabitants, you would not dare to prefer it to a peaceable and quiet Habitation: And is not the Wrath of God still more to be feared? Therefore, let me exhort such as are fixed in sober and religious Families to know it, and to improve their Mercy; and when you remove take Care it be not to a worse, I mean, to a Place of more Temptations and Snares, or where you cannot enjoy the Advantage of Family-Worship.

As this important Subject is now at a Close, I should be very glad to know what Success it hath been attended with; if I know any Thing of my own Heart, I think I can assuredly say, it was first delivered from the Pulpit, and now published from the Press, with a real View to your Instruction and Profit; to promote the Glory of God and the Welfare of your never-dying Souls: How far these Ends have been answered, it greatly becomes all concerned to enquire; and if any of you shall find, that however negligent and forgetful you may have hitherto been of Family-Religion, you have now, by the Influences of God's Holy Spirit accompanying what you have read or heard, been brought to a Sense of your Sin and Danger, and to a
sincere

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sincere Resolution, in the Strength of the
Lord, to do so no more; then bless the Lord
for his Goodness, and ascribe the Glory to
Him alone, who hath sealed to you your In-
structions. But if, on the other Hand, not-
withstanding all I have said on this Argu-
ment, any of you who are Governors of Fa-
milies will not be persuaded to set up and
maintain the Worship of God in your Houses,
then the Lord be Judge between you and me.
I have given you fair Warning of your Sin
and Danger; if you perish, your Blood will
be upon your own Heads, and as for me,
*my Judgment is with the Lord, and my Work
with my God, Isa. xlix. 4.*

Thus, by God's Assistance, I have finish-
ed this small Work, and discoursed of the se-
veral Heads which I undertook to consider,
from *Joshua's* pious Resolution. And now I
humbly offer this Mite of Service to God,
earnestly beseeching him to accept and pro-
per it to his own Glory, and the Benefit of
the Reader.

And may the God of all Grace make us
perfect in every good Work to do his Will,
working in us that which is well-pleasing in
his Sight, thro' *Jesus Christ*, to whom be
Glory for ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

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